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S/19-2. Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

The General Assembly

Adopts the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 annexed to the present resolution.

11th plenary meeting
28 June 1997

ANNEX

Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session
(23-28 June 1997)

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I. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

1. At the nineteenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly, we - heads of State or Government and other heads of delegations, together with our partners from international institutions and non-governmental organizations - have gathered to review progress achieved over the five years that have passed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to re-energize our commitment to further action on goals and objectives set out by the Earth Summit.

2. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was a landmark event. At that Conference, we launched a new global partnership for sustainable development - a partnership that respects the indivisibility of environmental protection and the development process. It is founded on a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level. Agenda 21,[1] adopted at Rio de Janeiro, addresses the pressing environment and development problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the next century in order to attain the long-term goals of sustainable development.

3. Our focus at this special session has been to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 in a comprehensive manner and not to renegotiate its provisions or to be selective in its implementation. We reaffirm that Agenda 21 remains the fundamental programme of action for achieving sustainable development. We reaffirm all the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[2] and the Forest Principles.[3] We are convinced that the achievement of sustainable development requires the integration of its economic, environmental and social components. We recommit to working together - in the spirit of global partnership - to reinforce our joint efforts to meet equitably the needs of present and future generations.

4. We acknowledge that a number of positive results have been achieved, but we are deeply concerned that the overall trends with respect to sustainable development are worse today than they were in 1992. We emphasize that the implementation of Agenda 21 in a comprehensive manner remains vitally important and is more urgent now than ever.

5. Time is of the essence in meeting the challenges of sustainable development as set out in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. To this end, we recommit ourselves to the global partnership established at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to the continuous dialogue and action inspired by the need to achieve a more efficient and equitable world economy, as a means to provide a supportive international climate for

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[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Ibid., annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex III (Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development for All Types of Forests).

achieving environment and development goals. We therefore, pledge to continue to work together, in good faith and in the spirit of partnership, to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21. We invite everyone throughout the world to join us in our common cause.

6. We commit ourselves to ensuring that the next comprehensive review of Agenda 21 in the year 2002 demonstrates greater measurable progress in achieving sustainable development. The present Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 is our vehicle for achieving that goal. We commit ourselves to fully implementing this Programme.

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT[4,5]

7. The five years that have elapsed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development have been characterized by the accelerated globalization of interactions among countries in the areas of world trade, foreign direct investment and capital markets. Globalization presents new opportunities and challenges. It is important that national and international environmental and social policies be implemented and strengthened in order to ensure that globalization trends have a positive impact on sustainable development, especially in developing countries. The impact of recent trends in globalization on developing countries has been uneven. A limited number of developing countries have been able to take advantage of those trends, attracting large inflows of external private capital and experiencing significant export-led growth and acceleration of growth in per capita gross domestic product. Many other countries, however, in particular African countries and the least developed countries, have shown slow or negative growth and continue to be marginalized. As a result, they generally experienced stagnating or falling per capita gross domestic product through 1995. In these and in some other developing countries, the problems of poverty, low levels of social development, inadequate infrastructure and lack of capital have prevented them from benefiting from globalization. While continuing their efforts to achieve sustainable development and to attract new investments, these countries still require international assistance in their efforts directed towards sustainable development. In particular the least developed countries continue to be heavily dependent on a declining volume of official development assistance for the capacity-building and infrastructure development required to provide for basic needs and more effective participation in the globalizing world economy. In an increasingly interdependent world economy, the responsible conduct of monetary and other macroeconomic policies requires that their potential impact on other countries be taken into account. Since the Conference, the countries with economies in transition have achieved significant progress in implementing the principles of sustainable development. However, the need for full integration of these

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[4] As provided in Agenda 21, the term "Governments", when used therein, will be deemed to include as well the European Economic Community (now the European Union) within its area of competence.

[5] All references in the present document to the platforms for or programmes of action of major conferences should be considered in a manner consistent with the reports of those conferences.

countries into the world economy remains one of the crucial problems on their way towards sustainable development. The international community should continue to support these countries in their efforts to accelerate the transition to a market economy and to achieve sustainable development.

8. Although economic growth - reinforced by globalization - has allowed some countries to reduce the proportion of people in poverty, for others marginalization has increased. Too many countries have seen economic conditions worsen and public services deteriorate; the total number of people in the world living in poverty has increased. Income inequality has increased among countries and also within them, unemployment has worsened in many countries, and the gap between the least developed countries and other countries has grown rapidly in recent years. On a more positive note, population growth rates have been declining globally, largely as a result of expanded basic education and health care. That trend is projected to lead to a stable world population in the middle of the twenty-first century. There has also been progress in social services, with expanding access to education, declining infant mortality and increasing life expectancy in most countries. However, many people, particularly in the least developed countries, still do not have access to adequate food and basic social services or to clean water and sanitation. Reducing current inequities in the distribution of wealth and access to resources, both within and among countries, is one of the most serious challenges facing humankind.

9. Five years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the state of the global environment has continued to deteriorate, as noted in the Global Environment Outlook[6] of the United Nations Environment Programme, and significant environmental problems remain deeply embedded in the socio-economic fabric of countries in all regions. Some progress has been made in terms of institutional development, international consensus-building, public participation and private sector actions and, as a result, a number of countries have succeeded in curbing pollution and slowing the rate of resource degradation. Overall, however, trends are worsening. Many polluting emissions, notably of toxic substances, greenhouse gases and waste volumes are continuing to increase although in some industrialized countries emissions are decreasing. Marginal progress has been made in addressing unsustainable production and consumption patterns. Insufficient progress has also been identified in the field of environmentally sound management and adequate control of transboundary movements of hazardous and radioactive wastes. Many countries undergoing rapid economic growth and urbanization are also experiencing increasing levels of air and water pollution, with accumulating impacts on human health. Acid rain and transboundary air pollution, once considered a problem only in the industrialized countries, are increasingly becoming a problem in many developing regions. In many poorer regions of the world, persistent poverty is contributing to accelerated degradation of natural resources and desertification has spread. In countries seriously affected by drought and/or desertification, especially those in Africa, their agricultural productivity, among other things, is uncertain and continues to decline, thereby hampering their efforts to achieve sustainable development. Inadequate and unsafe water supplies are affecting an increasing number of people worldwide, aggravating problems of ill health and food insecurity among the poor. Conditions in natural habitats and fragile ecosystems, including mountain ecosystems, are

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[6] Oxford, United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 1997.

resulting in diminishing biological diversity. At the global level, renewable resources, in particular fresh water, forests, topsoil and marine fish stocks, continue to be used at rates beyond their viable rates of regeneration; without improved management, this situation is clearly unsustainable.

10. While there has been progress in material and energy efficiency, particularly with reference to non-renewable resources, overall trends remain unsustainable. As a result, increasing levels of pollution threaten to exceed the capacity of the global environment to absorb them, increasing the potential obstacles to economic and social development in developing countries.

11. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, extensive efforts have been made by Governments and international organizations to integrate environmental, economic and social objectives into decision-making by elaborating new policies and strategies for sustainable development or by adapting existing policies and plans. As many as one hundred and fifty countries have responded to the commitments established at the Conference through national-level commissions or coordinating mechanisms designed to develop an integrated approach to sustainable development.

12. The major groups have demonstrated what can be achieved by taking committed action, sharing resources and building consensus, reflecting grass-roots concern and involvement. The efforts of local authorities are making Agenda 21 and the pursuit of sustainable development a reality at the local level through the implementation of "local Agenda 21s" and other sustainable development programmes. Non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, the scientific community and the media have increased public awareness and discussion of the relations between environment and development in all countries. The involvement, role and responsibilities of business and industry, including transnational corporations, are important. Hundreds of small and large businesses have made "green business" a new operating mode. Workers and trade unions have established partnerships with employers and communities to encourage sustainable development in the workplace. Farmer-led initiatives have resulted in improved agricultural practices contributing to sound resource management. Indigenous people have played an increasing role in addressing issues affecting their interests and particularly concerning their traditional knowledge and practices. Young people and women around the world have played a prominent role in galvanizing communities into recognizing their responsibilities to future generations. Nevertheless, more opportunities should be created for women to participate effectively in economic, social and political development as equal partners in all sectors of the economy.

13. Among the achievements since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development have been the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[7] the Convention on Biological Diversity[8] and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or

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[7] A/AC.237/18 (Part II)/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex I.

[8] United Nations Environment Programme, Convention on Biological Diversity (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

Desertification, particularly in Africa;[9] the conclusion of the Agreement on the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;[10] the adoption of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;[11] the elaboration of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities;[12] and the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.[13] Implementation of these important commitments and of others adopted before the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by all the parties to them, remains however, to be carried out, and in many cases further strengthening of their provisions is required as well as the mechanisms for putting them into effect. The establishment, restructuring, funding and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility were a major achievement. However, its levels of funding and replenishment have not been sufficient fully to meet its objectives.

14. Progress has been made in incorporating the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development - including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which embodies the important concept of and basis for international partnership; the precautionary principle; the polluter pays principle; and the environmental impact assessment principle - in a variety of international and national legal instruments. While some progress has been made in implementing United Nations Conference on Environment and Development commitments through a variety of international legal instruments, much remains to be done to embody the Rio principles more firmly in law and practice.

15. A number of major United Nations conferences have advanced international commitment for the achievement of long-term goals and objectives directed towards sustainable development.

16. Organizations and programmes of the United Nations system have played an important role in the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21. The Commission on Sustainable Development was established to review progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, advance global dialogue and foster partnerships for sustainable development. The Commission has catalysed new action and commitments and has contributed to the deliberations on

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[9] A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

[10] A/CONF.164/37; see also A/50/550, annex I.

[11] Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[12] A/51/116, annex II.

[13] Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, vol. XVII (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.V.3), document A/CONF.62/122.

sustainable development among a wide variety of partners within and outside the United Nations system. Although much remains to be done, progress has also been made at the national, regional and international levels in implementing the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Forest Principles, including through the Commission's Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

17. Provision of adequate and predictable financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries are critical elements for the implementation of Agenda 21. However, while some progress has been made, much remains to be done to activate the means of implementation set out in Agenda 21, in particular in the areas of finance and technology transfer, technical assistance and capacity-building.

18. Most developed countries have still not reached the United Nations target, reaffirmed by most countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, of committing 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance or the United Nations target, as agreed, of committing 0.15 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance to the least developed countries. Regrettably, on average, official development assistance as a percentage of the gross national product of developed countries has drastically declined in the post-Conference period, from 0.34 per cent in 1992 to 0.27 per cent in 1995, but official development assistance has taken more account of the need for an integrated approach to sustainable development.

19. In other areas, results have been encouraging since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. There has been a sizeable expansion of private flows of financial resources from developed to a limited number of developing countries and, in a number of countries, efforts have been made in support of domestic resource mobilization, including the increasing use of economic instruments to promote sustainable development.

20. In many developing countries, the debt situation remains a major constraint on achieving sustainable development. Although the debt situation of some middle-income countries has improved, there is a need to continue to address the debt problems of the heavily indebted poor countries, which continue to face unsustainable external debt burdens. The recent World Bank/International Monetary Fund Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative could help to address that issue with the cooperation of all creditor countries. Further efforts by the international community are still required to remove debt as an impediment to sustainable development.

21. Similarly, technology transfer and technology-related investment from public and private sources, which are particularly important to developing countries, have not been realized as outlined in Agenda 21. Although increased private flows have led to investments in industry and technology in some developing countries and economies in transition, many other countries have been left behind. Conditions in some of these countries have been less attractive to private sector investment and technological change has been slower, thus limiting their ability to meet their commitments to Agenda 21 and other international agreements. The technology gap between developed countries and, in particular, the least developed countries has widened.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21 IN AREAS REQUIRING URGENT ACTION

22. Agenda 21 and the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development established a comprehensive approach to the achievement of sustainable development. While it is the primary responsibility of national Governments to achieve the economic, social and environmental objectives of Agenda 21, it is essential that international cooperation be reactivated and intensified, recognizing, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as set forth in Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration. This requires the mobilization of stronger political will and the invigoration of a genuine new global partnership, taking into account the special needs and priorities of developing countries. Such an approach remains as relevant and as urgently needed as ever. It is clear from the assessment above that, although progress has been made in some areas, a major new effort will be required to achieve the goals established at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly in areas of cross-sectoral matters where implementation has yet to be achieved. The proposals set out in sections A to C below outline strategies for accelerating progress towards sustainable development. The sections are equally important and must be considered and implemented in a balanced and integrated way.

A. Integration of economic, social and environmental objectives

23. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. Sustained economic growth is essential to the economic and social development of all countries, in particular developing countries. Through such growth, which should be broadly based so as to benefit all people, countries will be able to improve the standards of living of their people through the eradication of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy and the provision of adequate shelter and secure employment for all, and the preservation of the integrity of the environment. Growth can foster development only if its benefits are fully shared. It must therefore also be guided by equity, justice and social and environmental considerations. Development, in turn, must involve measures that improve the human condition and the quality of life itself. Democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are also an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development.

24. Sustainable development strategies are important mechanisms for enhancing and linking national capacity so as to bring together priorities in social, economic and environmental policies. Hence, special attention must be given to the fulfilment of commitments in the areas set out below, in the framework of an integrated approach towards development, consisting of mutually reinforcing measures to sustain economic growth, as well as to promote social development and environmental protection. Achieving sustainable development cannot be carried out without greater integration at all policy-making levels and at operational levels, including the lowest administrative levels possible. Economic sectors, such as industry, agriculture, energy, transport and tourism, must take responsibility for the impact of their activities on human well-being and the physical environment. In the context of good governance, properly constructed strategies can enhance prospects for economic growth and employment and at the same time protect the

environment. All sectors of society should be involved in their development and implementation, as follows:

(a) By the year 2002, the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development that reflect the contributions and responsibilities of all interested parties should be completed in all countries, with assistance provided, as appropriate, through international cooperation, taking into account the special needs of the least developed countries. The efforts of developing countries in effectively implementing national strategies should be supported. Countries that already have national strategies should continue their efforts to enhance and effectively implement them. Assessment of progress achieved and exchange of experience among Governments should be promoted. Local Agenda 21s and other local sustainable development programmes, including youth activities, should also be actively encouraged;

(b) In integrating economic, social and environmental objectives, it is important that a broad package of policy instruments, including regulation, economic instruments, internalization of environmental costs in market prices, environmental and social impact analysis, and information dissemination, be worked out in the light of country-specific conditions to ensure that integrated approaches are effective and cost-efficient. To this end, a transparent and participatory process should be promoted. This will require the involvement of national legislative assemblies, as well as all actors of civil society, including youth and indigenous people and their communities, to complement the efforts of Governments for sustainable development. In particular, the empowerment and the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process, are central to all efforts to achieve such development;

(c) The implementation of policies aiming at sustainable development, including those contained in chapter 3 (Combating poverty) and in chapter 29 (Strengthening the role of workers and their trade unions) of Agenda 21, may enhance the opportunities for job creation, thus helping to achieve the fundamental goal of eradicating poverty.

An enabling international economic climate

25. A mutually supportive balance between the international and the national environment is needed in the pursuit of sustainable development. As a result of globalization, external factors have become critical in determining the success or failure of developing countries in their national efforts. The gap between developed and developing countries points to the continued need for a dynamic and enabling international economic environment supportive of international cooperation, particularly in the fields of finance, technology transfer, debt and trade, if the momentum for global progress towards sustainable development is to be maintained and increased.

26. To foster a dynamic and enabling international economic environment favourable to all countries is in the interest of all countries. Moreover, issues, including environmental issues, that bear on the international economic environment can be approached effectively only through a constructive dialogue and genuine partnership on the basis of mutuality of interests and benefits, taking into account that, in view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities.

Eradicating poverty

27. Given the severity of poverty, particularly in developing countries, the eradication of poverty is one of the fundamental goals of the international community and the entire United Nations system, as reflected in Commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development,[14] and is essential for sustainable development. Poverty eradication is thus an overriding theme of sustainable development for the coming years. The enormity and complexity of the poverty issue could very well endanger the social fabric, undermine economic development and the environment, and threaten political stability in many countries. To achieve poverty eradication, efforts of individual Governments and international cooperation and assistance should be brought together in a complementary way. Eradication of poverty depends on the full integration of people living in poverty into economic, social and political life. The empowerment of women is a critical factor for the eradication of poverty. Policies that promote such integration to combat poverty, in particular policies for providing basic social services and broader socio-economic development, are effective as well since enhancing the productive capacity of poor people increases both their well-being and that of their communities and societies, and facilitates their participation in resource conservation and environmental protection. The provision of basic social services and food security in an equitable way is a necessary condition for such integration and empowerment. The 20/20 initiative as referred to in the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development[15] is, among other things, a useful means for such integration. However, the five years since the Rio Conference have witnessed an increase in the number of people living in absolute poverty, particularly in developing countries. In this context, there is an urgent need for the timely and full implementation of all the relevant commitments, agreements and targets already agreed upon since the Rio Conference by the international community, including the United Nations system and international financial institutions. Full implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development is essential. Priority actions include:

(a) Improving access to sustainable livelihoods, entrepreneurial opportunities and productive resources, including land, water, credit, technical and administrative training, and appropriate technology, with particular efforts to broaden the human and social capital basis of societies so as to reach the rural poor and the urban informal sector;

(b) Providing universal access to basic social services, including basic education, health care, nutrition, clean water and sanitation;

(c) Progressively developing, in accordance with the financial and administrative capacities of each society, social protection systems to support those who cannot support themselves, either temporarily or permanently; the aim of social integration is to create a "society for all";

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[14] Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[15] Ibid., resolution 1, annex II.

(d) Empowering people living in poverty and their organizations by involving them fully in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of strategies and programmes for poverty eradication and community development and by ensuring that these programmes reflect their priorities;

(e) Addressing the disproportionate impact of poverty on women, in particular by removing legislative, policy, administrative and customary barriers to women's equal access to productive resources and services, including access to and control over land and other forms of property, credit, including micro-credit, inheritance, education, information, health care and technology. In this regard, full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action[16] is essential;

(f) Working together of interested donors and recipients to allocate increased shares of official development assistance to poverty eradication. The 20/20 initiative is an important principle in this respect, as it is based on a mutual commitment among donors and recipients to increasing resources allocated to basic social services;

(g) Intensifying international cooperation to support measures being taken in developing countries to eradicate poverty, to provide basic social protection and services, and to approach poverty eradication efforts in an integral and multidimensional manner.

Changing consumption and production patterns

28. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in the industrialized countries, are identified in Agenda 21 as the major cause of continued deterioration of the global environment. While unsustainable patterns in the industrialized countries continue to aggravate the threats to the environment, there remain huge difficulties for developing countries in meeting basic needs such as food, health care, shelter and education for people. All countries should strive to promote sustainable consumption patterns; developed countries should take the lead in achieving sustainable consumption patterns; developing countries should seek to achieve sustainable consumption patterns in their development process, guaranteeing the provision of basic needs for the poor, while avoiding those unsustainable patterns, particularly in industrialized countries, generally recognized as unduly hazardous to the environment, inefficient and wasteful, in their development processes. This requires enhanced technological and other assistance from industrialized countries. In the follow-up of the implementation of Agenda 21, the review of progress made in achieving sustainable consumption patterns should be given high priority.[17] Consistent with Agenda 21, the development and further elaboration of national policies and strategies, particularly in industrialized countries, are needed to encourage changes in unsustainable consumption and production patterns, while strengthening, as appropriate, international approaches and policies that promote sustainable consumption patterns on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated

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[16] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[17] See E/CN.17/1997/19, annex, appendix.

responsibilities, applying the polluter pays principle, and encouraging producer responsibility and greater consumer awareness. Eco-efficiency, cost internalization and product policies are also important tools for making consumption and production patterns more sustainable. Actions in this area should focus on:

(a) Promoting measures to internalize environmental costs and benefits in the price of goods and services, while seeking to avoid potential negative effects for market access by developing countries, particularly with a view to encouraging the use of environmentally preferable products and commodities. Governments should consider shifting the burden of taxation onto unsustainable patterns of production and consumption; it is of vital importance to achieve such an internalization of environmental costs. Such tax reforms should include a socially responsible process of reduction and elimination of subsidies to environmentally harmful activities;

(b) Promoting the role of business in shaping more sustainable patterns of consumption by encouraging, as appropriate, the voluntary publication of environmental and social assessments of its own activities, taking into account specific country conditions, and actions as an agent of change in the market, and actions in its role as a major consumer of goods and services;

(c) Developing core indicators to monitor critical trends in consumption and production patterns, with industrialized countries taking the lead;

(d) Identifying best practices through evaluations of policy measures with respect to their environmental effectiveness, efficiency and implications for social equity, and disseminating such evaluations;

(e) Taking into account the linkages between urbanization and the environmental and developmental effects of consumption and production patterns in cities, thus promoting more sustainable patterns of urbanization;

(f) Promoting international and national programmes for energy and material efficiency with timetables for their implementation, as appropriate. In this regard, attention should be given to studies that propose to improve the efficiency of resource use, including consideration of a 10-fold improvement in resource productivity in industrialized countries in the long term and a possible factor-four increase in industrialized countries in the next two or three decades. Further research is required to study the feasibility of these goals and the practical measures needed for their implementation. Industrialized countries will have a special responsibility and must take the lead in this respect. The Commission on Sustainable Development should consider this initiative in the coming years in exploring policies and measures necessary to implement eco-efficiency and, for this purpose, encourage the relevant bodies to adopt measures aimed at assisting developing countries in improving energy and material efficiency through the promotion of their endogenous capacity-building and economic development with enhanced and effective international support;

(g) Encouraging Governments to take the lead in changing consumption patterns by improving their own environmental performance with action-oriented policies and goals on procurement, the management of public facilities and the further integration of environmental concerns into national policy-making. Governments in developed countries, in particular, should take the lead in this regard;

(h) Encouraging the media, advertising and marketing sectors to help shape sustainable consumption patterns;

(i) Improving the quality of information regarding the environmental impact of products and services and, to that end, encouraging the voluntary and transparent use of eco-labelling;

(j) Promoting measures favouring eco-efficiency; however, developed countries should pay special attention to the needs of developing countries, in particular by encouraging positive impacts, and to the need to avoid negative impacts on export opportunities and on market access for developing countries and, as appropriate, for countries with economies in transition;

(k) Encouraging the development and strengthening of educational programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns;

(l) Encouraging business and industry to develop and apply environmentally sound technology that should aim not only at increasing competitiveness but also at reducing negative environmental impacts;

(m) Giving balanced consideration to both the demand side and the supply side of the economy in matching environmental concerns and economic factors, which could encourage changes in the behaviour of consumers and producers. A number of policy options should be examined; they include regulatory instruments, economic and social incentives and disincentives, facilities and infrastructure, information, education, and technology development and dissemination.

Making trade and environment mutually supportive

29. In order to accelerate economic growth, poverty eradication and environmental protection, particularly in developing countries, there is a need to establish macroeconomic conditions in both developed and developing countries that favour the development of instruments and structures enabling all countries, in particular developing countries, to benefit from globalization. International cooperation and support for capacity-building in trade, environment and development should be strengthened through renewed system-wide efforts, and with greater responsiveness to sustainable development objectives, by the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as by national Governments. There should be a balanced and integrated approach to trade and sustainable development, based on a combination of trade liberalization, economic development and environmental protection. Trade obstacles should be removed with a view to contributing to the achieving of more efficient use of the earth's natural resources in both economic and environmental terms. Trade liberalization should be accompanied by environmental and resource management policies in order to realize its full potential contribution to improved environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable development through the more efficient allocation and use of resources. The multilateral trading system should have the capacity to further integrate environmental considerations and enhance its contribution to sustainable development, without undermining its open, equitable and non-discriminatory character. The special and differential treatment for developing countries, especially the least developed countries, and the other commitments of the Uruguay Round of

multilateral trade negotiations[18] should be fully implemented in order to enable those countries to benefit from the international trading system, while conserving the environment. There is a need for continuing the elimination of discriminatory and protectionist practices in international trade relations, which will have the effect of improving access for the exports of developing countries. This will also facilitate the full integration of economies in transition into the world economy. In order to make trade, environment and development mutually supportive, measures need to be taken to ensure transparency in the use of trade measures related to the environment, and should address the root causes of environmental degradation so as not to result in disguised barriers to trade. Account should be taken of the fact that environmental standards valid for developed countries may have unwarranted social and economic costs in other countries, in particular developing countries. International cooperation is needed and unilateralism should be avoided. The following actions are required:

(a) There should be timely and full implementation of the results of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and full use of the Comprehensive and Integrated World Trade Organization Plan of Action for the Least Developed Countries;[19]

(b) An open, non-discriminatory, rule-based, equitable, secure, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system should be promoted. In this context, effective measures are called for to achieve the complete integration of developing countries and countries with economies in transition into the world economy and the new international trading system. In this connection, there is a need to promote the universality of the World Trade Organization and to facilitate the admission to membership in that organization, in a mutually beneficial way, of developing countries and countries with economies in transition applying for membership. Actions should be taken to maximize the opportunities and to minimize the difficulties of developing countries, including the net food-importing ones, especially the least developed countries, and of countries with economies in transition, in adjusting to the changes introduced by the Uruguay Round. Decisions on further liberalization of trade should take into account effects on sustainable development and should be consistent with an open, rule-based, non-discriminatory, equitable, secure and transparent multilateral trading system. The relationship between multilateral environmental agreements and the World Trade Organization rules should be clarified;

(c) Implementation of environmental measures should not result in disguised barriers to trade;

(d) Within the framework of Agenda 21, trade rules and environmental principles should interact harmoniously;

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[18] See Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994 (GATT secretariat publication, Sales No. GATT/1994-7), vol. I.

[19] Adopted by the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held at Singapore in December 1996 (WT/MIN(96)/14).

(e) Further analysis of the environmental effects of the international transport of goods is warranted;

(f) Cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant institutions should be strengthened on various issues, including (i) the role of positive measures in multilateral environmental agreements as part of a package of measures including, in certain cases, trade measures; (ii) the special conditions and needs of small and medium-sized enterprises in the trade and environment interface; (iii) trade and environment issues at the regional and subregional levels, including within the context of regional economic and trade as well as environmental agreements;

(g) Cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other relevant bodies within their existing respective mandates should be enhanced, inter alia, on environment and sustainable development issues. Without prejudice to the clear understanding in the World Trade Organization that future negotiations, if any, regarding a multilateral agreement on investment will take place only after an explicit consensus decision, future agreements on investments should take into account the objectives of sustainable development and, when developing countries are parties to these agreements, special attention should be given to their needs for investment;

(h) National Governments should make every effort to ensure policy coordination on trade, environment and development at the national level in support of sustainable development;

(i) There is a need for the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to consider ways to make trade and environment mutually supportive, including through due respect for the objectives and principles of the multilateral trading system and for the provisions of multilateral environmental agreements. Such considerations should be consistent with an open, rule-based, non-discriminatory, equitable, secure and transparent multilateral trading system.

Population

30. The impact of the relationship among economic growth, poverty, employment, environment and sustainable development has become a major concern. There is a need to recognize the critical linkages between demographic trends and factors and sustainable development. The current decline in population growth rates must be further promoted through national and international policies that promote economic development, social development, environmental protection, and poverty eradication, particularly the further expansion of basic education, with full and equal access for girls and women, and health care, including reproductive health care, including both

family planning and sexual health, consistent with the report of the International Conference on Population and Development.[20]

Health

31. The goals of sustainable development cannot be achieved when a high proportion of the population is afflicted with debilitating illnesses. An overriding goal for the future is to implement the Health for All strategy[21] and to enable all people, particularly the world's poor, to achieve a higher level of health and well-being, and to improve their economic productivity and social potential. Protecting children from environmental health threats and infectious disease is particularly urgent since children are more susceptible than adults to those threats. Top priority should be attached to supporting the efforts of countries, particularly developing countries, and international organizations to eradicate the major infectious diseases, especially malaria, which is on the increase, to improve and expand basic health and sanitation services, and to provide safe drinking water. It is also important to reduce indigenous cases of vaccine-preventable diseases through the promotion of widespread immunization programmes, promote accelerated research and vaccine development and reduce the transmission of other major infectious diseases, such as dengue fever, tuberculosis and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Given the severe and irreversible health effects of lead poisoning, particularly on children, it is important to accelerate the process of eliminating unsafe uses of lead, including the use of lead in gasoline worldwide, in light of country-specific conditions and with enhanced international support and assistance to developing countries, particularly through the timely provision of technical and financial assistance and the promotion of endogenous capacity-building. Strategies at the regional, national and local levels for reducing the potential risk due to ambient and indoor air pollution should be developed, bearing in mind their serious impacts on human health, including strategies to make parents, families and communities aware of the adverse environmental health impacts of tobacco. The clear linkage between health and the environment needs to be emphasized and the lack of information on the impact of environmental pollution on health should be addressed. Health issues should be fully integrated into national and subnational sustainable development plans and should be incorporated into project and programme development as a component of environmental impact assessments. Important to efforts at national levels is international cooperation in disease prevention, early warning, surveillance, reporting, training and research, and treatment.

Sustainable human settlements

32. Sustainable human settlements development is essential to sustainable development. The need to intensify efforts and cooperation to improve living conditions in the cities, towns, villages and rural areas throughout the world

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[20] Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18).

[21] See World Health Organization, Primary Health Care: Report of the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Ata, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 6-12 September 1978 (Geneva, 1978).

is recognized. Approximately half the world's population already lives in urban settlements, and by early in the next century the majority - more than 5 billion people - will be urban residents. Urban problems are concerns common to both developed and developing countries, although urbanization is occurring most rapidly in developing countries. Urbanization creates both challenges and opportunities. Global urbanization is a cross-sectoral phenomenon that has an impact on all aspects of sustainable development. Urgent action is needed to implement fully the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) consistent with its report,[22] and in Agenda 21. New and additional financial resources from various sources are necessary to achieve the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. Transfer of expertise and technology, capacity-building, decentralization of authority through, inter alia, strengthening of local capacity and private-public partnerships to improve the provision and environmentally sound management of infrastructure and social services should be accelerated to achieve more sustainable human settlements development. Local Agenda 21 programmes should also be actively encouraged. Global targets could be established by the Commission on Sustainable Development to promote local Agenda 21 campaigns and to deal with obstacles to local Agenda 21 initiatives.

B. Sectors and issues

33. The present section identifies a number of specific areas that are of widespread concern since failure to reverse current trends in these areas, notably in resource degradation, will have potentially disastrous effects on social and economic development, on human health and on environmental protection for all countries, particularly developing countries. All sectors covered by Agenda 21 are equally important and thus deserve attention by the international community on an equal footing. The need for integration is important in all sectors, including the areas of energy and transport because of the adverse effects that developments in those areas can have on human health and ecosystems; the areas of agriculture and water use, where inadequate land-use planning, poor water management and inappropriate technology can result in the degradation of natural resources and human impoverishment and where drought and desertification can result in land degradation and soil loss; and the area of management of marine resources, where competitive overexploitation can damage the resource base, food supplies and the livelihood of fishing communities, as well as the environment. The recommendations made in each of the sectors take into account the need for international cooperation in support of national efforts, within the context of the principles of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is likewise understood that these recommendations do not in any way prejudice the work accomplished under legally binding conventions, where they exist, concerning these sectors.

Fresh water

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[22] Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996 (A/CONF.165/14), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

34. Water resources are essential for satisfying basic human needs, health and food production, and the preservation of ecosystems, as well as for economic and social development in general. It is a matter of urgent concern that more than one fifth of all people still do not have access to safe drinking water and more than one half of humanity lacks adequate sanitation. From the perspective of developing countries, fresh water is a priority and a basic need, especially taking into account that in many developing countries fresh water is not readily available for all segments of the population, inter alia, owing to lack of adequate infrastructure and capacity, water scarcity, and technical and financial constraints. Moreover, fresh water is also crucial for developing countries in order to satisfy the basic needs of their population in the areas of agricultural irrigation, industrial development, hydroelectric generation, and so forth. In view of the growing demands on water, which is a finite resource, it will become a major limiting factor in socio-economic development unless early action is taken. There is growing concern regarding the increasing stress on water supplies caused by unsustainable use patterns, affecting both water quality and quantity, and the widespread lack of access to safe water supply and suitable sanitation in many developing countries. Because the commitments of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade of the 1980s have not been fully met, there is still a need to ensure the optimal use and protection of all fresh-water resources, so that the needs of everyone on this planet, including access to safe drinking water and sanitation, can be met. This calls for the highest priority to be given to the serious fresh-water problems facing many regions, especially in the developing world. There is an urgent need:

(a) To assign high priority, in accordance with specific national needs and conditions, to the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for integrated watershed management, including issues related to pollution and waste, the interrelationship between water and land, including mountains, forests, upstream and downstream users, estuarine environments, biodiversity and the preservation of aquatic ecosystems, wetlands, climate and land degradation and desertification, recognizing that subnational, national and regional approaches to fresh-water protection and consumption following a watershed basin or river basin approach offer a useful model for the protection of fresh-water supplies;

(b) To strengthen regional and international cooperation for technological transfer and the financing of integrated water resources programmes and projects, in particular those designed to increase access to safe water supply and sanitation;

(c) To ensure the continued participation of local communities, and women in particular, in the management of water resources development and use;

(d) To provide an enabling national and international environment that encourages investments from public and private sources to improve water supply and sanitation services, especially in fast growing urban and peri-urban areas, as well as in poor rural communities in developing countries; and for the international community to adopt and implement commitments to support the efforts to assist developing countries in achieving access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all;

(e) To recognize water as a social and economic good with a vital role in the satisfaction of basic human needs, food security, poverty alleviation and the protection of ecosystems. Economic valuation of water should be seen

within the context of its social and economic implications, reflecting the importance of meeting basic needs. Consideration should be given to the gradual implementation of pricing policies that are geared towards cost recovery and the equitable and efficient allocation of water, including the promotion of water conservation, in developed countries; such policies could also be considered in developing countries when they reach an appropriate stage in their development, so as to promote the harmonious management and development of scarce water resources and generate financial resources for investment in new water supply and treatment facilities. Such strategies should also include programmes assigned to minimize wasteful consumption of water;

(f) To strengthen the capability of Governments and international institutions to collect and manage information, including scientific, social and environmental data, in order to facilitate the integrated assessment and management of water resources, and foster regional and international cooperation for information dissemination and exchange through cooperative approaches among United Nations institutions, including the United Nations Environment Programme, and centres for environmental excellence. In this regard, technical assistance to developing countries will continue to be important;

(g) For the international community to give support to the efforts of developing countries, with their limited resources, to shift to higher-value, less water-intensive modes of agricultural and industrial production and to develop the educational and informational infrastructure necessary to improve the skills of the labour force required for the economic transformation that needs to take place if use of fresh-water resources is to be sustainable. International support for the integrated development of water resources in developing countries, and appropriate innovative initiatives and approaches at the bilateral and regional levels are also required;

(h) To encourage watercourse States to develop international watercourses with a view to attaining sustainable utilization and appropriate protection thereof and benefits therefrom, taking into account the interests of the watercourse States concerned.

35. Considering the urgent need for action in the field of fresh water, and building on existing principles and instruments, arrangements, programmes of action and customary uses of water, Governments call for a dialogue under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development, beginning at its sixth session, aimed at building a consensus on the necessary actions, and in particular, on the means of implementation and on tangible results, in order to consider initiating a strategic approach for the implementation of all aspects of the sustainable use of fresh water for social and economic purposes, including, inter alia, safe drinking water and sanitation, water for irrigation, recycling, and waste-water management, and the important role fresh water plays in natural ecosystems. This intergovernmental process will be fully fruitful only if there is a proved commitment by the international community to the provision of new and additional financial resources for the goals of this initiative.

Oceans and seas

36. Progress has been achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in the negotiation of agreements and voluntary

instruments for improving the conservation and management of fishery resources and for the protection of the marine environment. Furthermore, progress has been made in the conservation and management of specific fishery stocks for the purpose of securing the sustainable utilization of these resources. Despite this, the decline of many fish stocks, high levels of discards, and rising marine pollution continue. Governments should take full advantage of the challenge and opportunity presented by the International Year of the Ocean in 1998. There is a need to continue to improve decision-making at the national, regional and global levels. To address the need for improving global decision-making on the marine environment, there is an urgent need for Governments to implement decision 4/15 of the Commission on Sustainable Development,[23] in which the Commission, inter alia, called for a periodic intergovernmental review by the Commission of all aspects of the marine environment and its related issues, as described in chapter 17 of Agenda 21, and for which the overall legal framework was provided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. There is a need for concerted action by all countries and for improved cooperation to assist developing countries in implementing the relevant agreements and instruments in order that they may participate effectively in the sustainable use, conservation and management of their fishery resources, as provided for in the Convention and other international legal instruments, and achieve integrated coastal zone management. In that context, there is an urgent need for:

(a) All Governments to ratify or to accede to the relevant agreements as soon as possible and to implement effectively such agreements as well as relevant voluntary instruments;

(b) All Governments to implement General Assembly resolution 51/189 of 16 December 1996, including the strengthening of institutional links to be established between the relevant intergovernmental mechanisms involved in the development and implementation of integrated coastal zone management. Following progress on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and bearing in mind Principle 13 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, there is a need to strengthen the implementation of existing international and regional agreements on marine pollution, with a view in particular to ensuring better contingency planning, response, and liability and compensation mechanisms;

(c) Better identification of priorities for action at the global level to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment, as well as better means for integrating such action;

(d) Further international cooperation to support the strengthening, where needed, of regional and subregional agreements for the protection and sustainable use of the oceans and seas;

(e) Governments to prevent or eliminate overfishing and excess fishing capacity through the adoption of management measures and mechanisms to ensure the sustainable management and utilization of fishery resources and to undertake programmes of work to achieve the reduction and elimination of wasteful fishing practices, wherever they may occur, especially in relation to large-scale industrialized fishing. The emphasis given by the Commission on

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[23] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 8 (E/1996/28), chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/15, para. 45 (a).

Sustainable Development at its fourth session to the importance of effective conservation and management of fish stocks, and in particular to eliminating overfishing, in order to identify specific steps at national or regional levels to prevent or eliminate excess fishing capacity, will need to be carried forward in all appropriate international forums including, in particular, the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;

(f) Governments to consider the positive and negative impact of subsidies on the conservation and management of fisheries through national, regional and appropriate international organizations and, based on these analyses, to consider appropriate action;

(g) Governments to take actions, individually and through their participation in competent global and regional forums, to improve the quality and quantity of scientific data as a basis for effective decisions related to the protection of the marine environment and the conservation and management of marine living resources; in this regard, greater international cooperation is required to assist developing countries, in particular small island developing States, to operationalize data networks and clearing houses for information-sharing on oceans. In this context, particular emphasis must be placed on the collection of biological and other fisheries-related information and the resources for its collation, analysis and dissemination.

Forests

37. The management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests are a crucial factor in economic and social development, in environmental protection and in the planet's life-support system. Forests are one of the major reservoirs of biological diversity; they act as carbon sinks and reservoirs; and they are a significant source of renewable energy, particularly in the least developed countries. Forests are an integral part of sustainable development and are essential to many indigenous people and other forest-dependent people practising traditional lifestyles, forest owners and local communities, many of whom possess important traditional forest-related knowledge.

38. Since the adoption of the Forest Principles at the Rio Conference, tangible progress has been made in sustainable forest management at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and in the promotion of international cooperation on forests. The proposals for action contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests on its fourth session,[24] which were endorsed by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session,[25] represent significant progress and consensus on a wide range of forest issues.

39. To maintain the momentum generated by the Intergovernmental Panel process and to facilitate and encourage the holistic, integrated and balanced intergovernmental policy dialogue on all types of forests in the future, which continues to be an open, transparent and participatory process, requires a

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[24] E/CN.17/1997/12.

[25] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 9 (E/1997/29).

long-term political commitment to sustainable forest management worldwide. Against this background, there is an urgent need for:

(a) Countries and international organizations and institutions to implement the proposals for action agreed by the Intergovernmental Panel, in an expeditious and effective manner, and in collaboration and through effective partnership with all interested parties, including major groups, in particular indigenous people and local communities;

(b) Countries to develop national forest programmes in accordance with their respective national conditions, objectives and priorities;

(c) Enhanced international cooperation to implement the Intergovernmental Panel's proposals for action directed towards the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, including provision for financial resources, capacity-building, research and the transfer of technology;

(d) Further clarification of all issues arising from the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel process;

(e) International institutions and organizations to continue their work and to undertake further coordination and explore means for collaboration in the informal, high-level Inter-agency Task Force on Forests, focusing on the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel's proposals for action, in accordance with their respective mandates and comparative advantage;

(f) Countries to provide consistent guidance to the governing bodies of relevant international institutions and instruments with respect to taking efficient and effective measures, as well as to coordinating their forest-related work at all levels, in respect of incorporating the Intergovernmental Panel's proposals for action into their work programmes and under existing agreements and arrangements.

40. To help achieve this, it is decided to continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests through the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development to work in an open, transparent and participatory manner, with a focused and time-limited mandate, and charged with, inter alia:

(a) Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel's proposals for action;

(b) Reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

(c) Considering matters left pending as regards the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel, in particular trade and environment in relation to forest products and services, transfer of technology and the need for financial resources.

The Forum should also identify the possible elements of and work towards consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally binding instrument. The Forum will report on its work to the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999. Based on that report, and depending on the decision of the Commission at its eighth session, the Forum will engage in

further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

41. The Forum should convene as soon as possible to further elaborate its terms of reference and decide on organizational matters. It should be serviced by a small secretariat within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat supported by voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Governments and international organizations.

Energy

42. Energy is essential to economic and social development and improved quality of life. However, sustainable patterns of production, distribution and use of energy are crucial. Fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) will continue to dominate the energy supply situation for many years to come in most developed and developing countries. What is required then is to reduce the environmental impact of their continued development, and to reduce local health hazards and environmental pollution through enhanced international cooperation, notably in the provision of concessional finance for capacity development and transfer of the relevant technology, and through appropriate national action.

43. In developing countries, sharp increases in energy services are required to improve the standard of living of their growing populations. The increase in the level of energy services would have a beneficial impact on poverty eradication by increasing employment opportunities and improving transportation, health and education. Many developing countries, in particular the least developed, face the urgent need to provide adequate modern energy services, especially to billions of people in rural areas. This requires significant financial, human and technical resources and a broad-based mix of energy sources.

44. The objectives envisaged in this section should reflect the need for equity, adequate energy supplies and increasing energy consumption in developing countries and should take into account the situation of countries that are highly dependent on income generated from the production, processing and export, and/or consumption, of fossil fuels and that have serious difficulties in switching to alternative sources of energy, and the situation of countries highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

45. Advances towards sustainable energy use are taking place and all parties can benefit from progress made in other countries. It is also necessary to ensure international cooperation for promoting energy conservation and improvement of energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy and research, and the development and dissemination of innovative energy-related technology.

46. Therefore there is a need for:

(a) A movement towards sustainable patterns of production, distribution and use of energy. To advance this work at the intergovernmental level, the Commission on Sustainable Development will discuss energy issues at its ninth session. Noting the vital role of energy in the continuation of sustained economic growth, especially for developing countries, be they importers or

suppliers of energy, and recognizing the complexities and interdependencies inherent in addressing energy issues within the context of sustainable development, preparations for this session should be initiated at the seventh session and should utilize an open-ended intergovernmental group of experts on energy and sustainable development to be held in conjunction with inter-sessional meetings of the eighth and ninth sessions of the Commission. In line with the objectives of Agenda 21, the ninth session of the Commission should contribute to a sustainable energy future for all;

(b) Evolving concrete measures to strengthen international cooperation in order to assist developing countries in their domestic efforts to provide adequate modern energy services, especially electricity, to all sections of their population, particularly in rural areas, in an environmentally sound manner;

(c) Countries to promote policies and plans, bearing in mind the specific needs and priorities of developing countries, that take into account the economic, social and environmental aspects of the production, distribution and use of energy, including the use of lower-pollutant sources of energy such as natural gas;

(d) Evolving commitments for the transfer of relevant technology, including time-bound commitments, as appropriate, to developing countries and economies in transition so as to enable them to increase the use of renewable energy sources and cleaner fossil fuels and to improve efficiency in energy production, distribution and use. Countries need to systematically increase the use of renewable energy sources according to their specific social, economic, natural, geographical and climatic conditions and cleaner fuel technologies, including fossil fuel technologies, and to improve efficiency in energy production, distribution and use and in other industrial production processes that are intensive users of energy;

(e) Promoting efforts in research on and development and use of renewable energy technologies at the international and national levels;

(f) In the context of fossil fuels, encouraging further research, development, and the application and transfer of technology of a cleaner and more efficient nature, through effective international support;

(g) Encouraging Governments and the private sector to consider appropriate ways to gradually promote environmental cost internalization so as to achieve more sustainable use of energy, taking fully into account the economic, social and environmental conditions of all countries, in particular developing countries. In this regard, the international community should cooperate to minimize the possible adverse impacts on the development process of developing countries resulting from the implementation of those policies and measures. There is also a need to encourage the reduction and the gradual elimination of subsidies for energy production and consumption that inhibit sustainable development. Such policies should take fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries, particularly least developed countries, as reflected in the special and differential treatment accorded them in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures;

(h) Encouraging better coordination on the issue of energy within the United Nations system, under the guidance of the General Assembly and taking into account the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council.

Transport

47. The transport sector and mobility in general have an essential and positive role to play in economic and social development, and transportation needs will undoubtedly increase. Over the next twenty years, transportation is expected to be the major driving force behind a growing world demand for energy. The transport sector is the largest end-user of energy in developed countries and the fastest growing one in most developing countries. Current patterns of transportation with their dominant patterns of energy use are not sustainable and on the basis of present trends may compound the environmental problems the world is facing and the health impacts referred to in paragraph 31 above. There is a need for:

(a) The promotion of integrated transport policies that consider alternative approaches to meeting commercial and private mobility needs and improve performance in the transport sector at the national, regional and global levels, and particularly a need to encourage international cooperation in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies in the transport sector and implementation of appropriate training programmes in accordance with national programmes and priorities;

(b) The integration of land-use and urban, peri-urban and rural transport planning, taking into account the need to protect ecosystems;

(c) The adoption and promotion, as appropriate, of measures to mitigate the negative impact of transportation on the environment, including measures to improve efficiency in the transportation sector;

(d) The use of a broad spectrum of policy instruments to improve energy efficiency and efficiency standards in transportation and related sectors;

(e) The continuation of studies in the appropriate forums, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, on the use of economic instruments for the mitigation of the negative environmental impact of aviation in the context of sustainable development;

(f) Accelerating the phasing-out of the use of leaded gasoline as soon as possible, in pursuit of the objectives of reducing the severe health impacts of human exposure to lead. In this regard, technological and economic assistance should continue to be provided to developing countries in order to enable them to make such a transition;

(g) The promotion of voluntary guidelines for environmentally friendly transport, and actions for reducing vehicle emissions of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and volatile organic compounds, as soon as possible;

(h) Partnerships at the national level, involving Governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, for strengthening transport infrastructures and developing innovative mass transport schemes.

Atmosphere

48. Ensuring that the global climate and atmosphere are not further damaged, with irreversible consequences for future generations, requires political will and concerted efforts by the international community in accordance with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Under the Convention, some first steps have been taken to deal with the global problem of climate change. Despite the adoption of the Convention, the emission and concentration of greenhouse gases continue to rise, even as scientific evidence assembled by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other relevant bodies continues to diminish the uncertainties and points ever more strongly to the severe risk of global climate change. So far, insufficient progress has been made by many developed countries in meeting their aim to return greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. It is recognized as one critical element of the Berlin Mandate[26] that the commitments set out under article 4, paragraph 2 (a) and (b), of the Convention are inadequate and that there is therefore a need to strengthen them. It is most important that the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at its third session, to be held at Kyoto, Japan in December 1997, adopt a protocol or other legal instrument that fully encompasses the Berlin Mandate. The Geneva Ministerial Declaration,[27] which was noted without formal adoption, but which received majority support among ministers and other heads of delegation attending the second session of the Conference of the Parties, also called for, inter alia, the acceleration of negotiations on the text of a legally binding protocol or other legal instrument.

49. At the present nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, the international community has confirmed its recognition of the problem of climate change as one of the biggest challenges facing the world in the next century. The leaders of many countries have stressed the seriousness of this problem in their statements to the Assembly, and have outlined the actions they had in hand to respond to the challenge, both in their own countries and internationally.

50. The ultimate goal that all countries share is to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. This requires efficient and cost-effective policies and measures that will be sufficient to result in a significant reduction in emissions. At the present session, countries reviewed the status of the preparations for the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. All agreed that a satisfactory result was vital.

51. The position of many countries with respect to these negotiations is still evolving, and it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to seek to predetermine the results; however, useful discussions on evolving positions took place.

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[26] FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add.1, sect. I, decision 1/CP.1.

[27] Report of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on its second session, Geneva, 8-19 July 1996 (FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1), annex.

52. There is already widespread but not universal agreement that it will be necessary to consider legally binding, meaningful, realistic and equitable targets for countries listed in annex I to the Convention that will result in significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions within specified time frames, such as 2005, 2010 and 2020. In addition to establishing targets, there is also widespread agreement that it will be necessary to consider ways and means of achieving them and to take into account the economic, adverse environmental and other effects of such response measures on all countries, particularly developing countries.

53. International cooperation in the implementation of chapter 9 of Agenda 21, in particular in the transfer of technology to and capacity-building in developing countries, is also essential to promote the effective implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

54. There is also a need to strengthen systematic observational networks so as to identify the possible onset and distribution of climate change and assess potential impacts, particularly at the regional level.

55. The ozone layer continues to be severely depleted and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer[28] needs to be strengthened. The Copenhagen Amendment to the Protocol needs to be ratified. The recent successful conclusion of the replenishment negotiations with respect to the Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund is welcomed. This has made available funds for, among other things, earlier phase-out of ozone-depleting substances, including methyl bromide, in developing countries. Future replenishment should also be adequate to ensure timely implementation of the Montreal Protocol. An increased focus on capacity-building programmes in developing countries within multilateral funds is also needed, as well as the implementation of effective measures against illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances.

56. Rising levels of transboundary air pollution should be countered, including through appropriate regional cooperation to reduce pollution levels.

Toxic chemicals

57. The sound management of chemicals is essential to sustainable development and is fundamental to human health and environmental protection. All those responsible for chemicals throughout their life cycle bear the responsibility for achieving this goal. Substantial progress on the sound management of chemicals has been made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular through the establishment of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and the Inter-Organizational Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals. In addition, domestic regulations have been complemented by the Code of Ethics on the International Trade in Chemicals and by voluntary industry initiatives, such as Responsible Care. Despite substantial progress, a number of chemicals continue to pose significant threats to local, regional and global ecosystems and to human health. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, there has been an increased understanding of the serious damage that certain toxic chemicals can cause to human health and the environment. Much remains to be done and the environmentally sound management of chemicals should

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[28] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1522, No. 26369. (Forthcoming.)

continue to be an important issue well beyond 2000. Particular attention should also be given to cooperation in the development and transfer of technology of safe substitutes and in the development of capacity for the production of such substitutes. The decision concerning the sound management of chemicals adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its nineteenth session[29] should be implemented in accordance with the agreed timetables for negotiations on the conventions relating to prior informed consent and persistent organic pollutants. It is noted that inorganic chemicals possess roles and behaviour that are distinct from organic chemicals.

Hazardous wastes

58. Substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the Basel Convention,[30] the Bamako Convention,[31] the Fourth Lomé Convention[32] and other regional conventions, although more remains to be done. Important initiatives aimed at promoting the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes under the Basel Convention, include (a) activities undertaken to prevent illegal traffic in hazardous wastes; (b) the establishment of regional centres for training and technology transfer regarding hazardous waste minimization and management; and (c) the treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes as close as possible to their source of origin. These initiatives should be further developed. It is also important and urgent that work under the Basel Convention be completed to define which hazardous wastes are controlled under the Convention and to negotiate, adopt and implement a protocol on liability and compensation for damage resulting from the transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes. Land contaminated by the disposal of hazardous wastes needs to be identified and remedial actions put in hand. Integrated management solutions are also required to minimize urban and industrial waste generation and to promote recycling and reuse.

Radioactive wastes

59. Radioactive wastes can have very serious environmental and human health impacts over long periods of time. It is therefore essential that they be managed in a safe and responsible way. The storage, transportation, transboundary movement and disposal of radioactive wastes should be guided by all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and by Agenda 21. States that generate radioactive wastes have a responsibility to ensure their safe storage and disposal. In general, radioactive wastes

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[29] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25), annex, decision 19/13.

[30] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1673, No. 28911 (forthcoming).

[31] Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, International Legal Materials, vol. 30, No. 3 (May 1991), p. 775, and vol. 31, No. 1 (January 1992), p. 164.

[32] See The Courier Africa-Caribbean-Pacific-European Community, No. 120 (March-April 1990).

should be disposed of in the territory of the State in which they are generated as far as is compatible with the safety of the management of such material. Each country has the responsibility of ensuring that radioactive wastes that fall within its jurisdiction are managed properly in accordance with internationally accepted principles, taking fully into account any transboundary effects. The international community should make all efforts to prohibit the export of radioactive wastes to those countries that do not have appropriate waste treatment and storage facilities. The international community recognizes that regional arrangements or jointly used facilities might be appropriate for the disposal of such wastes in certain circumstances. The management of radioactive wastes[33] should be undertaken in a manner consistent with international law, including the provisions of relevant international and regional conventions, and with internationally accepted standards. It is important to intensify safety measures with regard to radioactive wastes. States, in cooperation with relevant international organizations, where appropriate, should not promote or allow the storage or disposal of high-level, intermediate-level or low-level radioactive wastes near the marine environment unless they determine that scientific evidence, consistent with the applicable internationally agreed principles and guidelines, shows that such storage or disposal poses no unacceptable risk to people or the marine environment and does not interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea. In the process of the consideration of that evidence, appropriate application of the precautionary approach principle should be made. Further action is needed by the international community to address the need for enhancing awareness of the importance of the safe management of radioactive wastes, and to ensure the prevention of incidents and accidents involving the uncontrolled release of such wastes.

60. One of the main recommendations of Agenda 21 and of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its second session in this area was to support the ongoing efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Maritime Organization and other relevant international organizations. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management currently being negotiated under the auspices of the Agency is now close to completion. It will provide a comprehensive codification of international law and a guide to best practices in this area. It will rightly be based on all the principles of best practice for this subject that have evolved in the international community, including the principle that, in general, radioactive wastes should be disposed of in the State in which they were generated as far as is compatible with the safety of the management of such material. Governments should finalize this text and are urged to ratify and implement it as soon as possible so as to further improve practice and strengthen safety in this area. Transportation of irradiated nuclear fuel and high-level waste by sea should be guided by the INF Code, which should be considered for development into a mandatory instrument. The issue of the potential transboundary environmental effects of activities related to the management of radioactive wastes and the question of prior notification, relevant information and consultation with States that could potentially be affected by such effects, should be further addressed within the appropriate forums.

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[33] Where "management" appears in the section on radioactive wastes, it is defined as handling, treatment, storage, transportation, including transboundary movement, and final disposal of such wastes.

61. Increased global and regional cooperation, including exchange of information and experience and transfer of appropriate technologies, is needed to improve the management of radioactive wastes. There is a need to support the clean-up of sites contaminated as a result of all types of nuclear activity and to conduct health studies in the regions around those sites, as appropriate, with a view to identifying where health treatment may be needed and should be provided. Technical assistance should be provided to developing countries, recognizing the special needs of small island developing States in particular, to enable them to develop or improve procedures for the management and safe disposal of radioactive wastes deriving from the use of radionuclides in medicine, research and industry.

Land and sustainable agriculture

62. Land degradation and soil loss threaten the livelihood of millions of people and future food security, with implications for water resources and the conservation of biodiversity. There is an urgent need to define ways to combat or reverse the worldwide accelerating trend of soil degradation, using an ecosystem approach, taking into account the needs of populations living in mountain ecosystems and recognizing the multiple functions of agriculture. The greatest challenge for humanity is to protect and sustainably manage the natural resource base on which food and fibre production depend, while feeding and housing a population that is still growing. The international community has recognized the need for an integrated approach to the protection and sustainable management of land and soil resources, as stated in decision III/11 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,[34] including identification of land degradation, which involves all interested parties at the local as well as the national level, including farmers, small-scale food producers, indigenous people(s), non-governmental organizations and, in particular, women, who have a vital role in rural communities. This should include action to ensure secure land tenure and access to land, credit and training, as well as the removal of obstacles that inhibit farmers, especially small-scale farmers and peasants, from investing in and improving their lands and farms.

63. It remains essential to continue efforts for the eradication of poverty through, inter alia, capacity-building to reinforce local food systems, improving food security and providing adequate nutrition for the more than 800 million undernourished people in the world, located mainly in developing countries. Governments should formulate policies that promote sustainable agriculture as well as productivity and profitability. Comprehensive rural policies are required to improve access to land, combat poverty, create employment and reduce rural emigration. In accordance with the commitments agreed to in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, adopted by the World Food Summit,[35] sustainable food security for both the urban and the rural poor should be a policy priority,

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[34] Report of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 3-14 November 1996 (UNEP/CBD/COP/3/38), annex II.

[35] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Report of the World Food Summit, Rome, 13-17 November 1996, Part One (WFS 96/REP) (Rome, 1997), appendix.

and developed countries and the international community should provide assistance to developing countries to this end. To meet these objectives, Governments should attach high priority to implementing the commitments of the Rome Declaration and Plan of Action, especially the call for a minimum target of halving the number of undernourished people in the world by the year 2015. Governments and international organizations are encouraged to implement the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, adopted by the International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources held at Leipzig, Germany from 17 to 23 June 1996. At the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in 1998, the issues of sustainable agriculture and land use should be considered in relation to freshwater. The challenge for agricultural research is to increase yields on all farmlands while protecting and conserving the natural resource base. The international community and Governments must continue or increase investments in agricultural research because it can take years or decades to develop new lines of research and put research findings into sustainable practice on the land. Developing countries, particularly those with high population densities, will need international cooperation to gain access to the results of such research and to technology aimed at improving agricultural productivity in limited spaces. More generally, international cooperation continues to be needed to assist developing countries in many other aspects of basic requirements of agriculture. There is a need to support the continuation of the reform process in conformity with the Uruguay Round agreements, particularly article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture, and to fully implement the World Trade Organization Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries.

Desertification and drought

64. Governments are urged to conclude (by signing and ratifying, accepting, approving and/or acceding to) and to implement as soon as possible the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which entered into force on 26 December 1996, and to support and actively participate in the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which is to be held in Rome in September 1997.

65. The international community is urged to recognize the vital importance and necessity of international cooperation and partnership in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. In order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms, the international community, in particular developed countries, should therefore support the global mechanism that would have the capacity to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial resources for advancing the implementation of the Convention and its regional annexes, and to contribute to the eradication of poverty, which is one of the principal consequences of desertification and drought in the majority of affected countries. Another view was that the international community, in particular developed countries, should provide new and additional resources towards the same ends. The transfer to developing countries of environmentally sound, economically viable and socially acceptable technologies relevant to combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in affected areas, should be undertaken without delay on mutually agreed terms.

Biodiversity

66. There remains an urgent need for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of components of genetic resources. The threat to biodiversity stems mainly from habitat destruction, over-harvesting, pollution and the inappropriate introduction of foreign plants and animals. There is an urgent need for Governments and the international community, with the support of relevant international institutions, as appropriate:

(a) To take decisive action to conserve and maintain genes, species and ecosystems with a view to promoting the sustainable management of biological diversity;

(b) To ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity and implement it fully and effectively together with the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, including recommendations on agricultural biological diversity and the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity, and pursue urgently other tasks identified by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting under the work programme on terrestrial biological diversity,[36] within the context of the ecosystems approach adopted in the Convention;

(c) To undertake concrete actions for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, consistent with the provisions of the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties on, inter alia, access to genetic resources and the handling of biotechnology and its benefits;

(d) To pay further attention to the provision of new and additional financial resources for the implementation of the Convention;

(e) To facilitate the transfer of technologies, including biotechnology, to developing countries, consistent with the provisions of the Convention;

(f) To respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles, and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from traditional knowledge so that those communities are adequately protected and rewarded, consistent with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and in accordance with the decisions of the Conference of the Parties;

(g) To complete rapidly the biosafety protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity, on the understanding that the United Nations Environment Programme International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology may be used as an interim mechanism during its development, and to complement it after its conclusion, including the recommendations on capacity-building related to biosafety;

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[36] Report of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 3-14 November 1996 (UNEP/CBD/COP/3/38), annex II, decision III/12.

(h) To stress the importance of the establishment of a clearing-house mechanism by Parties to the Convention, consistent with the provisions of the Convention;

(i) To recognize the role of women in the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources;

(j) To provide the necessary support to integrate the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources into national development plans;

(k) To promote international cooperation to develop and strengthen national capacity-building, including human resource development and institution-building;

(l) To provide incentive measures at the national, regional and international levels to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and to consider means to enhance developing countries' capabilities to compete in the emerging market for biological resources, while improving the functioning of that market.

Sustainable tourism

67. Tourism is now one of the world's largest industries and one of its fastest growing economic sectors. The expected growth in the tourism sector and the increasing reliance of many developing countries, including small island developing States, on this sector as a major employer and contributor to local, national, subregional and regional economies highlights the need to pay special attention to the relationship between environmental conservation and protection and sustainable tourism. In this regard, the efforts of developing countries to broaden the traditional concept of tourism to include cultural and eco-tourism merit special consideration as well as the assistance of the international community, including the international financial institutions.

68. There is a need to consider further the importance of tourism in the context of Agenda 21. Tourism, like other sectors, uses resources, generates wastes and creates environmental, cultural and social costs and benefits in the process. For sustainable patterns of consumption and production in the tourism sector, it is essential to strengthen national policy development and enhance capacity in the areas of physical planning, impact assessment, and the use of economic and regulatory instruments, as well as in the areas of information, education and marketing. A particular concern is the degradation of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems, such as coral reefs, mountains, coastal areas and wetlands.

69. Policy development and implementation should take place in cooperation with all interested parties, especially the private sector and local and indigenous communities. The Commission should develop an action-oriented international programme of work on sustainable tourism, to be defined in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant bodies.

70. The sustainable development of tourism is of importance for all countries, in particular for small island developing States. International cooperation is needed to facilitate tourism development in developing countries - including the development and marketing of eco-tourism, bearing in mind the importance of the conservation policies required to secure long-term benefits from development in this sector - in particular in small island developing States, in the context of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Small island developing States

71. The international community reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Commission on Sustainable Development carried out a mid-term review of selected programme areas of the Programme of Action at its fourth session, in 1996. At its sixth session, in 1998, the Commission will undertake a review of all the outstanding chapters and issues of the Programme of Action. A full and comprehensive review of the Programme of Action, consistent with the review of other United Nations global conferences, is scheduled for 1999. The Commission, at its fifth session, adopted a resolution on modalities for the full and comprehensive review of the Programme of Action, in which it recommended that the General Assembly hold a two-day special session immediately preceding its fifty-fourth session for an in-depth assessment and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action.[37] The full implementation of the decision would represent a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the Global Conference for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

72. Considerable efforts are being made at the national and regional levels to implement the Programme of Action. These efforts need to be supplemented by effective financial support from the international community. External assistance for building the requisite infrastructure and for national capacity-building, including human and institutional capacity, and for facilitating access to information on sustainable development practices and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in accordance with paragraph 34.14 (b) of Agenda 21, is crucial for small island developing States to effectively attain the goals of the Programme of Action. To assist national capacity-building, the small island developing States information network and small island developing States technical assistance programme should be made operational as soon as possible, with support for existing regional and subregional institutions.

Natural disasters

73. Natural disasters have disproportionate consequences for developing countries, in particular small island developing States and countries with extremely fragile ecosystems. Programmes for sustainable development should give higher priority to the implementation of the commitments made at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held at Yokohama, Japan from 23 to 27 May 1994.[38] There is a particular need for capacity-building for

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[37] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 9 (E/1997/29), chap. I, resolution 5/1, para. 6.

[38] See A/CONF.172/9 and Add.1.

disaster planning and management and for the promotion and facilitation of the transfer of early-warning technologies to countries prone to disasters, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

74. Given that further work is needed throughout the world, there is a special need to provide developing countries with further assistance in:

(a) Strengthening mechanisms and policies designed to reduce the effects of natural disasters, improve preparedness and integrate natural disaster considerations in development planning, through, inter alia, access to resources for disaster mitigation and preparedness, response and recovery;

(b) Improving access to relevant technology and training in hazard and risk assessment and early warning systems, and in protection from environmental disasters, consistent with national, subregional and regional strategies;

(c) Providing and facilitating technical, scientific and financial support for disaster preparedness and response in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Major technological and other disasters with an adverse impact on the environment

75. Major technological and other disasters with an adverse impact on the environment can be a substantial obstacle in the way of achieving the goals of sustainable development in many countries. The international community should intensify cooperation in the prevention and reduction of such disasters and in disaster relief and post-disaster rehabilitation in order to enhance the capabilities of affected countries to cope with such situations.

C. Means of implementation

Financial resources and mechanisms

76. Financial resources and mechanisms play a key role in the implementation of Agenda 21. In general, the financing for the implementation of Agenda 21 will come from a country's own public and private sectors. For developing countries, official development assistance is a main source of external funding, and substantial new and additional funding for sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 will be required. Hence, all financial commitments of Agenda 21, particularly those contained in chapter 33, and the provisions with regard to new and additional resources that are both adequate and predictable need to be urgently fulfilled. Renewed efforts are essential to ensure that all sources of funding contribute to economic growth, social development and environmental protection in the context of sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21.

77. For developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries, official development assistance remains a main source of external funding; it is essential for the prompt and effective implementation of Agenda 21 and cannot generally be replaced by private capital flows. Developed countries should therefore fulfil the commitments undertaken to reach the accepted United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as soon as possible. In this context the present downward trend in

the ratio of official development assistance to gross national product causes concern. Intensified efforts should be made to reverse this trend, taking into account the need for improving the quality and effectiveness of official development assistance. In the spirit of global partnership, the underlying factors that have led to this decrease should be addressed by all countries. Strategies should be worked out for increasing donor support for aid programmes and revitalizing the commitments that donors made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Some countries already meet or exceed the 0.7 per cent agreed target. Official financial flows to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, remain an essential element of the partnership embodied in Agenda 21. Official development assistance plays a significant role, inter alia, in capacity-building, infrastructure, combating poverty and environmental protection in developing countries, and a crucial role in the least developed countries. Official development assistance can play an important complementary and catalytic role in promoting economic growth and may, in some cases, play a catalytic role in encouraging private investment and, where appropriate, all aspects of country-driven capacity-building and strengthening.

78. Funding by multilateral financial institutions through their concessional mechanisms is also essential to developing countries in their efforts to fully implement the sustainable development objectives contained in Agenda 21. Such institutions should continue to respond to the development needs and priorities of developing countries. Developed countries should urgently meet their commitments under the eleventh replenishment of the International Development Association.

79. Continued and full donor commitment to adequate, sustained and predictable funding for Global Environment Facility operations is important for developing countries so that global environmental benefits can be further achieved. Donor countries are urged to engage in providing new and additional resources, with a view to equitable burden-sharing, through the satisfactory replenishment of the Facility, which makes available grant and concessional funding designed to achieve global environmental benefits, thereby promoting sustainable development. Consideration should be given to further exploring the flexibility of the existing mandate of the Facility in supporting activities to achieve global environmental benefits. With regard to the project cycle, further efforts should be made to continue streamlining the decision-making process in order to maintain an effective and efficient, as well as transparent, participatory and democratic framework. The Global Environment Facility, when acting as the operating entity of the financial mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, should continue to operate in conformity with those Conventions and promote their implementation. The Facility implementing agencies, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, should strengthen, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates, their cooperation at all levels, including the field level.

80. The efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the operational activities of the United Nations system must be enhanced by, inter alia, a substantial increase in their funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, as well as through the full implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 48/162 of 20 December 1993. There is a need for a

substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries.

81. Private capital is a major tool for achieving economic growth in a growing number of developing countries. Higher levels of foreign private investment should be mobilized given its mounting importance. To stimulate higher levels of private investment, Governments should aim at ensuring macroeconomic stability, open trade and investment policies, and well-functioning legal and financial systems. Further studies should be undertaken, including studies on the design of an appropriate environment, at both the national and international levels, for facilitating foreign private investment, in particular foreign direct investment flows to developing countries, and enhancing its contribution to sustainable development. To ensure that such investments are supportive of sustainable development objectives, it is essential that the national Governments of both investor and recipient countries provide appropriate regulatory frameworks and incentives for private investment. Therefore further work should be undertaken on the design of appropriate policies and measures aimed at promoting long-term investment flows to developing countries for activities that increase their productive capability, and at reducing the volatility of these flows. Official development assistance donors and multilateral development banks are encouraged to strengthen their commitment to supporting investment in developing countries in a manner that jointly promotes economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

82. The external debt problem continues to hamper the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable development. To resolve the remaining debt problems of the heavily indebted poor countries, creditor and debtor countries and international financial institutions should continue their efforts to find effective, equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the debt problem, including debt relief in the form of debt rescheduling, debt reduction, debt swaps and, as appropriate, debt cancellation, as well as grants and concessional flows that will help restore creditworthiness. The joint World Bank/International Monetary Fund Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative supported by the Paris Club creditor countries is an important development to reduce the multilateral debt problem. Implementation of the Initiative requires additional financial resources from both bilateral and multilateral creditors without affecting the support required for the development activities of developing countries.

83. A fuller understanding of the impact of indebtedness on the pursuit of sustainable development by developing countries is needed. To this end, the United Nations Secretariat, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are invited to collaborate with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in further considering the interrelationship between indebtedness and sustainable development for developing countries.

84. While international cooperation is very important in assisting developing countries in their development efforts, in general financing for the implementation of Agenda 21 will come from countries' own public and private sectors. Policies for promoting domestic resource mobilization, including credit, could encompass sound macroeconomic reforms, including fiscal and monetary policy reforms, review and reform of existing subsidies, and the promotion of personal savings and access to credit, especially micro-credit, in particular for women. Such policies should be decided by

each country, taking into account its own characteristics and capabilities and different levels of development, especially as reflected in national sustainable development strategies, where they exist.

85. There is a need for making existing subsidies more transparent in order to increase public awareness of their actual economic, social and environmental impact, and for reforming or, where appropriate, removing them. Further national and international research in that area should be promoted in order to assist Governments in identifying and considering phasing-out subsidies that have market distorting, and socially and environmentally damaging impacts. Subsidy reductions should take full account of the specific conditions and the different levels of development of individual countries and should consider potentially regressive impacts, particularly on developing countries. In addition, it would be desirable to use international cooperation and coordination to promote the reduction of subsidies where these have important implications for competitiveness.

86. In order to reduce the barriers to the expanded use of economic instruments, Governments and international organizations should collect and share information on their use and introduce pilot schemes that would, inter alia, demonstrate how to make the best use of them while avoiding adverse effects on competitiveness and the terms of trade of all countries, particularly developing countries, and on marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society. When introducing economic instruments that raise the cost of economic activities for households and small and medium-sized enterprises, Governments should consider gradual phase-ins, public education programmes and targeted technical assistance as strategies for reducing distributional impacts. Various studies and practical experience in a number of countries, in particular developed countries, indicate that the appropriate use of relevant economic instruments may help generate positive possibilities for shifting consumer and producer behaviour to more sustainable directions in those countries. There is, however, a need to conduct further studies and test practical experience in more countries, taking into account country-specific conditions and the acceptability, legitimacy, equity, efficiency and effectiveness of such economic instruments.

87. Innovative financial mechanisms are currently under discussion in international and national forums but have not yet fully evolved conceptually. The Secretary-General is to submit a report concerning innovative financing mechanisms to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997. In view of the widespread interest in those mechanisms, appropriate organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are invited to consider conducting forward-looking studies of concerted action on such mechanisms and to share them with the Commission on Sustainable Development, other relevant intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. In this regard, innovative funding should complement official development assistance, not replace it. New initiatives for cooperative implementation of environment and development objectives under mutually beneficial incentive structures should be further explored.

Transfer of environmentally sound technologies

88. The availability of scientific and technological information and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies are essential requirements for sustainable development. There is an urgent need for

developing countries to acquire greater access to environmentally sound technologies if they are to meet the obligations agreed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in the relevant international conventions. The ability of developing countries to participate in, benefit from and contribute to rapid advances in science and technology can significantly influence their development. This calls for the urgent fulfilment of all the Conference commitments concerning concrete measures for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries. The international community should promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries for the implementation of Agenda 21. Current forms of cooperation involving the public and private sectors of developing and developed countries should be built upon and expanded. In this context, it is important to identify barriers and restrictions to the transfer of publicly and privately owned environmentally sound technologies, with a view to reducing such constraints while creating specific incentives, fiscal and otherwise, for the transfer of such technologies. Progress in the fulfilment of all the provisions contained in chapter 34 of Agenda 21 should be reviewed regularly as part of the multi-year work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

89. Technology transfer and the development of the human and institutional capacity to adapt, absorb and disseminate technologies, as well as to generate technical knowledge and innovations, are part of the same process and must be given equal importance. Governments have an important role to play in providing, inter alia, research and development institutions with incentives to promote and contribute to the development of institutional and human capacities.

90. Much of the most advanced environmentally sound technology is developed and held by the private sector. The creation of an enabling environment, on the part of both developed and developing countries, including supportive economic and fiscal measures, as well as a practical system of environmental regulations and compliance mechanisms, can help to stimulate private sector investment in and transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries. New ways of financial intermediation for the financing of environmentally sound technologies, such as "green credit lines", should be examined. Further efforts should be made by Governments and international development institutions to facilitate the transfer of privately owned technology on concessional terms, as mutually agreed, to developing countries, especially the least developed countries.

91. A proportion of technology is held or owned by Governments and public institutions or results from publicly funded research and development activities. The Government's control and influence over the technological knowledge produced in publicly funded research and development institutions open up the potential for the generation of publicly owned technologies that could be made accessible to developing countries, and could be an important means for Governments to catalyse private sector technology transfer. Proposals for the further study of the options with respect to those technologies and publicly funded research and development activities are to be welcomed.

92. Governments should create a legal and policy framework that is conducive to technology-related private sector investments and long-term sustainable development objectives. Governments and international development institutions should continue to play a key role in establishing public-private partnerships, within and between developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Such partnerships are essential for linking the advantages of the private sector - access to finance and technology, managerial efficiency, entrepreneurial experience and engineering expertise - with the capacity of Governments to create a policy environment that is conducive to technology-related private sector investments and long-term sustainable development objectives.

93. The creation of centres for the transfer of technology at various levels, including the regional level, could greatly contribute to achieving the objective of transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries. For this purpose, existing United Nations bodies, including, as appropriate, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the regional commissions, should cooperate and mechanisms be used, such as technical cooperation among developing countries and economic cooperation among developing countries.

94. Governments and international development institutions can also play an important role in bringing together companies from developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition so that they can create sustainable and mutually beneficial business linkages. Incentives should be provided to stimulate the building of joint ventures between small and medium-sized enterprises of developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and cleaner production programmes in public and private companies should be supported.

95. Governments of developing countries should take appropriate measures to strengthen South-South cooperation for technology transfer and capacity-building. Such measures could include the networking of existing national information systems and sources on environmentally sound technologies, and the networking of national cleaner production centres, as well as the establishment of sector-specific regional centres for technology transfer and capacity-building. Interested donor countries and international organizations should further assist developing countries in those efforts through, inter alia, supporting trilateral arrangements and contributing to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation.

96. Attention must also be given to technology needs assessment as a tool for Governments in identifying a portfolio for technology transfer projects and capacity-building activities to be undertaken to facilitate and accelerate the development, adoption and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies in particular sectors of the national economy. It is also important for Governments to promote the integration of environmental technology assessment with technology needs assessment as an important tool for evaluating environmentally sound technologies and the organizational, managerial and human resource systems related to the proper use of those technologies.

97. There is a need to further explore and enhance the potential of global electronic information and telecommunication networks. This would enable

countries to choose among the available technological options that are most appropriate to their needs. In this respect, the international community should assist developing countries in enhancing their capacities.

Capacity-building

98. Renewed commitment and support from the international community is essential to support national efforts for capacity-building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

99. The United Nations Development Programme, inter alia, through its Capacity 21 programme, should give priority attention to building capacity for the elaboration of sustainable development strategies based on participatory approaches. In this context, developing countries should be assisted, particularly in the areas of the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects.

100. Capacity-building efforts should pay particular attention to the needs of women in order to ensure that their skills and experience are fully used in decision-making at all levels. The special needs, culture, traditions and expertise of indigenous people must be recognized. International financial institutions should continue to give high priority to funding capacity-building for sustainable development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Special attention should also be given to strengthening the ability of developing countries to absorb and generate technologies. International cooperation needs to be strengthened to promote the endogenous capacity of developing countries to utilize scientific and technological developments from abroad and to adapt them to local conditions. The role of the private sector in capacity-building should be further promoted and enhanced. South-South cooperation in capacity-building should be further supported through "triangular" cooperative arrangements. Both developed and developing countries, in cooperation with relevant international institutions, need to strengthen their efforts to develop and implement strategies for more effective sharing of environmental expertise and data.

Science

101. Public and private investment in science, education and training, and research and development should be increased significantly, with emphasis on the need to ensure equal access to opportunities for girls and women.

102. International consensus-building is facilitated by the availability of authoritative scientific evidence. There is a need for further scientific cooperation, especially across disciplines, in order to verify and strengthen scientific evidence and make it accessible to developing countries. This evidence is important for assessing environmental conditions and changes. Steps should also be taken by Governments, academia, and scientific institutions to improve access to scientific information related to the environment and sustainable development. The promotion of existing regional and global networks may be useful for this purpose.

103. Increasing efforts to build and strengthen scientific and technological capacity in developing countries is an extremely important objective. Multilateral and bilateral donor agencies and Governments, as well as specific funding mechanisms, should continue to enhance their support for developing

countries. Attention should also be given to countries with economies in transition.

104. The international community should also actively collaborate in promoting innovations in information and communication technologies for the purpose of reducing environmental impacts, inter alia, by taking approaches to technology transfer and cooperation that are based on user needs.

Education and awareness

105. Education increases human welfare, and is a decisive factor in enabling people to become productive and responsible members of society. A fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development is an adequately financed and effective educational system at all levels, particularly the primary and secondary levels, that is accessible to all and that augments both human capacity and well-being. The core themes of education for sustainability include lifelong learning, interdisciplinary education, partnerships, multicultural education and empowerment. Priority should be given to ensuring women's and girls' full and equal access to all levels of education and training. Special attention should also be paid to the training of teachers, youth leaders and other educators. Education should also be seen as a means of empowering youth and vulnerable and marginalized groups, including those in rural areas, through intergenerational partnerships and peer education. Even in countries with strong education systems, there is a need to reorient education, awareness and training so as to promote widespread public understanding, critical analysis and support for sustainable development. Education for a sustainable future should engage a wide spectrum of institutions and sectors, including but not limited to business/industry, international organizations, youth, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, higher education, government, educators and foundations, to address the concepts and issues of sustainable development, as embodied throughout Agenda 21, and should include the preparation of sustainable development education plans and programmes, as emphasized in the work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the subject adopted in 1996.[39] The concept of education for a sustainable future will be further developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in cooperation with others.

106. It is necessary to support and strengthen universities and other academic centres in promoting cooperation among them, particularly cooperation between those of developing countries and those of developed countries.

International legal instruments and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

107. The implementation and application of the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development should be the subject of regular assessment and reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development by the Secretariat in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular.

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[39] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 8 (E/1996/28), chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/11.

108. Access to information and broad public participation in decision-making are fundamental to sustainable development. Further efforts are required to promote, in the light of country-specific conditions, the integration of environment and development policies, through appropriate legal and regulatory policies, instruments and enforcement mechanisms at the national, state, provincial and local levels. At the national level, each individual should have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in the communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. Governments and legislators, with the support, where appropriate, of competent international organizations, should establish judicial and administrative procedures for legal redress and remedy of actions affecting environment and development that may be unlawful or infringe on rights under the law, and should provide access to individuals, groups and organizations with a recognized legal interest. Access should be provided to effective judicial and administrative channels for affected individuals and groups to ensure that all authorities, both national and local, and other civil organizations remain accountable for their actions in accordance with their obligations, at the appropriate levels for the country concerned, taking into account the judicial and administrative systems of the country concerned.

109. Taking into account the provisions of chapter 39, particularly paragraph 39.1, of Agenda 21, it is necessary to continue the progressive development and, as and when appropriate, codification of international law related to sustainable development. Relevant bodies in which such tasks are being undertaken should cooperate and coordinate in this regard.

110. Implementation of and compliance with commitments made under international treaties and other instruments in the field of the environment remain a priority. Implementation can be promoted by secure, sustained and predictable financial support, sufficient institutional capacity, human resources and adequate access to technology. Cooperation on implementation between States on mutually agreed terms may help reduce potential sources of conflict between States. In this context, States should further study and consider methods to broaden and make more effective the range of techniques available at present, taking into account relevant experience under existing agreements and, where appropriate, modalities for dispute avoidance and settlement, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It is also important to further improve reporting and data-collection systems and to further develop appropriate compliance mechanisms and procedures, on a mutually agreed basis, to help and encourage States to fulfil all their obligations, including means of implementation, under multilateral environmental agreements. Developing countries should be assisted to develop these tools according to country-specific conditions.

Information and tools for measuring progress

111. The further development of cost-effective tools for collecting and disseminating information for decision makers at all levels through strengthened data collection, including, as appropriate, gender-disaggregated data and information that makes visible the unremunerated work of women for use in programme planning and implementation, compilation and analysis is urgently needed. In this context, emphasis will be placed on support for national and international scientific and technological data centres with appropriate electronic communication links between them.

112. A supportive environment needs to be established to enhance national capacities and capabilities for information collection, processing and dissemination, especially in developing countries, to facilitate public access to information on global environmental issues through appropriate means, including high-tech information and communication infrastructure related to the global environment, in the light of country-specific conditions, using, where available, such tools as geographic information systems and video transmission technology, including global mapping. In this regard, international cooperation is essential.

113. Environmental impact assessments are an important national tool for sustainable development. In accordance with Principle 17 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, environmental impact assessments should be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and are subject to a decision of a competent national authority; where appropriate, they should be made available early in the project cycle.

114. The work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development on indicators of sustainable development should result in a practicable and agreed set of indicators, suited to country-specific conditions, including a limited number of aggregated indicators, to be used at the national level, on a voluntary basis, by the year 2000. Such indicators of sustainable development, including, where appropriate, and subject to nationally specific conditions, sector-specific ones, should play an important role in monitoring progress towards sustainable development at the national level and in facilitating national reporting, as appropriate.

115. National reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 have proved to be a valuable means of sharing information at the international and regional levels and, even more important, of providing a focus for the coordination of issues related to sustainable development at the national level within individual countries. National reporting should continue (see also para. 133 (b) and (c) below).

IV. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

116. The achievement of sustainable development requires continued support from international institutions. The institutional framework outlined in chapter 38 of Agenda 21 and determined by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992 and other relevant resolutions, including the specific functions and roles of various organs, organizations and programmes within and outside the United Nations system, will continue to be fully relevant in the period after the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly. In the light of the ongoing discussions on reform within the United Nations, international institutional arrangements in the area of sustainable development are intended to contribute to the goal of strengthening the entire United Nations system. In this context, the strengthening of the institutions for sustainable development, as well as the achievement of the goals and objectives set out below are particularly important.

A. Greater coherence in various intergovernmental organizations and processes

117. Given the increasing number of decision-making bodies concerned with various aspects of sustainable development, including international conventions, there is an ever greater need for better policy coordination at the intergovernmental level, as well as for continued and more concerted efforts to enhance collaboration among the secretariats of those decision-making bodies. Under the guidance of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council should play a strengthened role in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields.

118. The conferences of the parties to conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it, as well as other conventions related to sustainable development, should cooperate in exploring ways and means of collaborating in their work to advance the effective implementation of the conventions. There is also a need for environmental conventions to continue to pursue sustainable development objectives consistent with their provisions and be fully responsive to Agenda 21. To this end, inter alia, the conferences of the parties to or governing bodies of the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or as a result of it, and of other relevant conventions and agreements should, if appropriate, give consideration to the co-location of secretariats, to improving the scheduling of meetings, to integrating national reporting requirements, to improving the balance between sessions of the conferences of the parties and sessions of their subsidiary bodies, and to encouraging and facilitating the participation of Governments in those sessions, at an appropriate level.

119. Institutional arrangements for the convention secretariats should provide effective support and efficient services, while ensuring the appropriate autonomy necessary for them to be efficient at their respective locations. At the international and national levels there is a need for, inter alia, better scientific assessment of ecological linkages between the conventions; identification of programmes that have multiple benefits; and enhanced public awareness-raising with respect to the conventions. Such tasks should be undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme in accordance with the relevant decisions of its Governing Council and in full cooperation with the conferences of the parties to and governing bodies of relevant conventions. Efforts of convention secretariats, in response to requests from the respective conferences of the parties, to explore, where appropriate, modalities for suitable liaison arrangements in Geneva and/or New York for the purpose of enhancing linkages with delegations and organizations at those United Nations centres are welcomed and fully supported.

120. It is necessary to strengthen the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its system of task managers, with a view to further enhancing system-wide intersectoral cooperation and coordination for the implementation of Agenda 21 and for the promotion of coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences in the area of sustainable development.

121. The Commission on Sustainable Development should promote increased regional implementation of Agenda 21 in cooperation with relevant regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations regional commissions, in accordance with the results of their priority-setting efforts, with a view to enhancing the role such bodies play in the achievement of sustainable development objectives agreed at the international level. The regional

commissions could provide appropriate support, consistent with their work programmes, to regional meetings of experts related to the implementation of Agenda 21.

B. Role of relevant organizations and institutions of the United Nations system

122. In order to facilitate the national implementation of Agenda 21, all organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, within their respective areas of expertise and mandates, should strengthen, individually and jointly, the support for national efforts to implement Agenda 21 and make their efforts and actions consistent with national plans, policies and priorities of member States. Coordination of United Nations activities at the field level should be further enhanced through the resident coordinator system in full consultation with national Governments.

123. The role of United Nations Environment Programme, as the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment, should be further enhanced. Taking into account its catalytic role, and in conformity with Agenda 21 and the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, adopted on 7 February 1997,[40] the Programme is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. In this context, decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997 of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council on governance of the Programme[41] and other related Governing Council decisions[41] are relevant. The role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the further development of international environmental law should be strengthened, including the development of coherent interlinkages among relevant environmental conventions in cooperation with their respective conferences of the parties or governing bodies. In performing its functions related to the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it, and other relevant conventions, the United Nations Environment Programme should strive to promote the effective implementation of those conventions in a manner consistent with the provisions of the conventions and the decisions of the conferences of the parties.

124. The United Nations Environment Programme, in the performance of its role, should focus on environmental issues, taking into account the development perspective. A revitalized Programme should be supported by adequate, stable and predictable funding. The Programme should continue providing effective support to the Commission on Sustainable Development, inter alia, in the form of scientific, technical and policy information and analysis of and advice on global environmental issues.

125. The United Nations Development Programme should continue to strengthen its contribution to and programmes in sustainable development and the

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[40] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25), annex, decision 19/1, annex.

[41] Ibid., Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25), annex.

implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels, particularly in the area of promoting capacity-building (including through its Capacity 21 programme) in cooperation with other organizations, as well as in the field of poverty eradication.

126. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/167 of 16 December 1996 and relevant decisions of the Trade and Development Board on the work programme, should continue to play a key role in the implementation of Agenda 21 through the integrated examination of linkages among trade, investment, technology, finance and sustainable development.

127. The Committee on Trade and Environment of the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Environment Programme should advance their coordinated work on trade and environment, involving other appropriate international and regional organizations in their cooperation and coordination. In coordination with the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Environment Programme should continue to support efforts to promote the integration of trade, environment and development. The Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to play its important role in the deliberations on trade and environment so as to facilitate the integrated consideration of all factors relevant for achieving sustainable development.

128. Implementation of the commitment of the international financial institutions to sustainable development should continue to be strengthened. The World Bank has a significant role to play, bearing in mind its expertise and the overall volume of resources that it commands.

129. Operationalization of the global mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa is also essential.

C. Future role and programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development

130. The Commission on Sustainable Development, within its mandate as specified in General Assembly resolution 47/191, will continue to provide a central forum for reviewing progress and for urging further implementation of Agenda 21 and other commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it; for conducting a high-level policy debate aimed at consensus-building on sustainable development; and for catalysing action and long-term commitment to sustainable development at all levels. It should continue to undertake these tasks in complementing and providing interlinkages to the work of other United Nations organs, organizations and bodies acting in the field of sustainable development. The Commission has a role to play in assessing the challenges of globalization as they relate to sustainable development. The Commission should perform its functions in coordination with other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and with related organizations and institutions, including making recommendations, within its mandate, to the Economic and Social Council, bearing in mind the interrelated outcomes of recent United Nations conferences.

131. The Commission should focus on issues that are crucial to achieving the goals of sustainable development. It should promote policies that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability and should provide for integrated consideration of linkages, both among sectors and between sectoral and cross-sectoral aspects of Agenda 21. In this connection, the Commission should carry out its work in such a manner as to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of work undertaken by other relevant forums.

132. In the light of the above, it is recommended that the Commission on Sustainable Development adopt the multi-year programme of work for the period 1998-2002 contained in the appendix below.

D. Methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development

133. Based on the experience gained during the period 1993-1997, the Commission, under the guidance of the Economic and Social Council, should:

(a) Make concerted efforts to attract the greater involvement in its work of ministers and high-level national policy makers responsible for specific economic and social sectors, who, in particular, are encouraged to participate in the annual high-level segment of the Commission, together with the ministers and policy makers responsible for environment and development. The high-level segments of the Commission should become more interactive, and should focus on the priority issues being considered at a particular session. The Bureau of the Commission should conduct timely and open-ended consultations with the view to improving the organization of the work of the high-level segment;

(b) Continue to provide a forum for the exchange of national experience and best practices in the area of sustainable development, including through voluntary national communications or reports. Consideration should be given to the results of ongoing work aimed at streamlining requests for national information and reporting and to the results of the "pilot phase" relating to indicators of sustainable development. In this context, the Commission should consider more effective modalities for the further implementation of the commitments made in Agenda 21, with appropriate emphasis on the means of implementation. Countries may wish to submit to the Commission, on a voluntary basis, information regarding their efforts to incorporate the relevant recommendations of other United Nations conferences in national sustainable development strategies;

(c) Take into account regional developments related to the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It should provide a forum for the exchange of experience on regional and subregional initiatives and regional collaboration for sustainable development. This could include the promotion of the voluntary regional exchange of national experience in the implementation of Agenda 21 and, inter alia, the possible development of modalities for reviews within regions by and among those countries that voluntarily agree to do so. In this context, the Commission should encourage the availability of funding for the implementation of initiatives related to such reviews;

(d) Establish closer interaction with international financial, development and trade institutions, as well as with other relevant bodies

within and outside the United Nations system, including the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Environment Programme, which, in turn, are invited to take full account of the results of policy deliberations in the Commission and to integrate them in their own work programmes and activities;

(e) Strengthen its interaction with representatives of major groups, including through greater and better use of focused dialogue sessions and round tables. These groups are important resources in operationalizing, managing and promoting sustainable development and contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21. The major groups are encouraged to adopt arrangements for coordination and interaction in providing inputs to the Commission. Taking into account the Commission's programme of work, this could include inputs from:

(i) The scientific community and research institutions, relating to the greater understanding of the interactions between human activity and natural ecosystems and on how to manage global systems sustainably;

(ii) Women, children and youth, indigenous people and their communities, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and their trade unions and farmers on the elaboration, promotion and sharing of effective strategies, policies, practices and processes to promote sustainable development;

(iii) Business and industry groups on the elaboration, promotion and sharing of sustainable development practices and the promotion of corporate responsibility and accountability;

(f) Organize the implementation of its next multi-year programme of work in the most effective and productive way, including through shortening its annual meeting to two weeks. The inter-sessional ad hoc working groups should help to focus the Commission's sessions by identifying key elements to be discussed and important problems to be addressed within specific items of the Commission's programme of work. Government hosted and funded expert meetings will continue to provide inputs to the work of the Commission.

134. The Secretary-General is invited to review the functioning of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development and present proposals on ways to promote more direct interaction between the Board and the Commission, with a view to ensuring that the Board contributes to the deliberations on specific themes considered by the Commission in accordance with its programme of work.

135. The work of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources should be more compatible with and supportive of the programme of work of the Commission. The Economic and Social Council, in carrying out its functions related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, should consider, at its substantive session of 1997, the most effective means of bringing this about.

136. The arrangements for the election of the Bureau should be changed in order to allow the same Bureau to provide guidance in the preparations for and to lead the work during the annual sessions of the Commission. The Commission

would benefit from such a change. The Economic and Social Council should take the necessary action at its substantive session of 1997 to ensure that these new arrangements take effect.

137. The next comprehensive review of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 by the General Assembly will take place in the year 2002. The modalities of this review should be determined at a later stage.

Appendix

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 1998-2002

1998 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns		
Sectoral theme: STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT Review of outstanding chapters of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[a]	Cross-sectoral theme: TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY/ CAPACITY-BUILDING/ EDUCATION/SCIENCE/ AWARENESS-RAISING	Economic sector/major group: INDUSTRY
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-8, 10-15, 18-21, 23-34, 36, 37 and 40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-4, 6, 16, 23-37 and 40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 4, 6, 9, 16, 17, 19-21, 23-35 and 40

1999 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns		
Comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States		
Sectoral theme: OCEANS AND SEAS	Cross-sectoral theme: CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS	Economic sector/major group: TOURISM
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 5-7, 9, 15, 17, 19-32, 34-36, 39 and 40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-10, 14, 18-32, 34-36 and 40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-7, 13, 15, 17, 23-33 and 36

2000 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns		
Sectoral theme: INTEGRATED PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES	Cross-sectoral theme: FINANCIAL RESOURCES/ TRADE AND INVESTMENT/ ECONOMIC GROWTH	Economic sector/major group: AGRICULTURE[b] Day of Indigenous People
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-8, 10-37 and 40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-4, 23-33, 36-38 and 40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-7, 10-16, 18-21, 23-34, 37 and 40

2001 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns		
Sectoral theme: ATMOSPHERE/ENERGY	Cross-sectoral theme: INFORMATION FOR DECISION-MAKING AND PARTICIPATION INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	Economic sector/major group: ENERGY/TRANSPORT
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 4, 6-9, 11-14, 17, 23-37, 39 and 40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2, 4, 6, 8, 23-36 and 38-40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-5, 8, 9, 20, 23-37 and 40

2002 session
Comprehensive review

[a] Review to include those chapters of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States not covered in the in-depth review carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session.

[b] Including forestry.